

**REMARKS**

The Notice of Allowance dated January 24, 2003 has been received. However, further prosecution is desired since it is believed that the invention warrants further claim protection.

Accordingly, a Request for a Continuing Prosecution Application is being filed concurrently. Although the present application has a US "filing date" of December 27, 2001, that was actually the date of completion of the requirements for entering the National Stage on an International Application that was filed on March 17, 2000. Since the International filing date preceded May 29, 2000 and the application is in compliance with 35 USC 371, it is respectfully submitted that the requirements for filing a CPA have been met (see MPEP 201.06(d), second paragraph in the right-hand column on page 200-43)).

As a precautionary measure, however, new independent claims 10 and 11 are being presented for examination. Claim 10 is an independent claim that corresponds generally to claim 2, placed in Jepson-type form, plus an additional "wherein" clause derived from claim 4. It is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is patentable over the prior art of record. New claim 11 is an omnibus claim, and it is respectfully submitted that it, too, is patentable over the prior art.

It is anticipated that a further Preliminary Amendment will be filed in the near future to add additional new claims, and possibly also cancel one or both of claims 10 and 11.

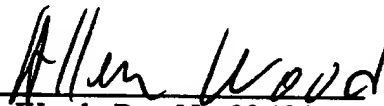
Further examination of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

April 24, 2003

Date

AW:tlc

  
Allen Wood - Reg. No. 28,134  
RABIN & BERDO, P.C.  
Telephone: 202-371-8976  
Telefax: 202-408-0924  
CUSTOMER NO. 23995

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Ryuji NISHIYAMA